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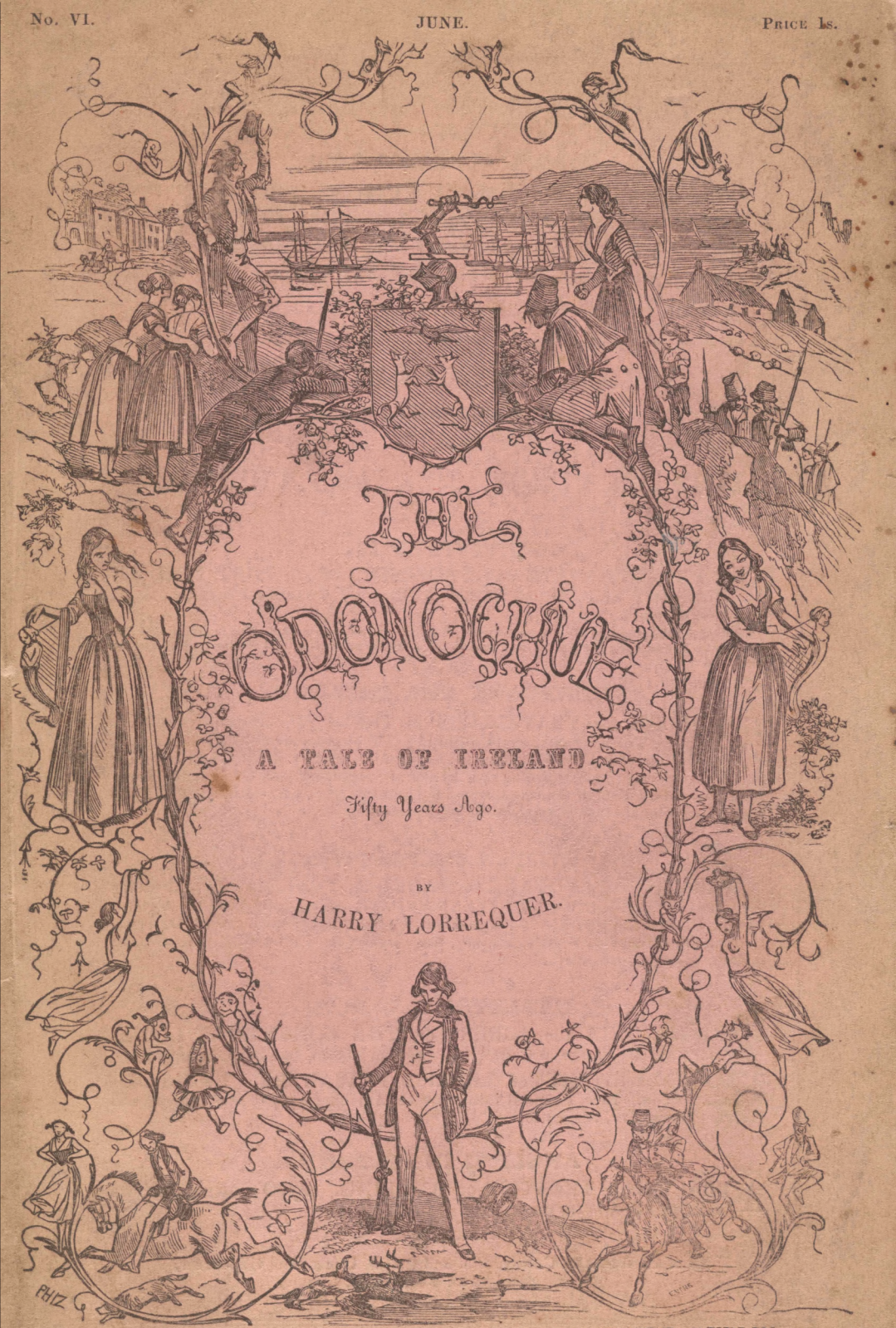

THE O'DONOGHUE

A TALE OF IRELAND

Fifty Years Ago.

BY

HARRY LORREQUER.

WILLIAM CURRY, JUN. AND CO., SACKVILLE-STREET, DUBLIN.

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Kerry astonishes Sir Marmaduke.

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CHAPTER XX.

TEMPTATION IN A WEAK HOUR.

WHEN Mark O'Donoghue left the room, his passion had become almost ungovernable—the entrance of his cousin Kate had but dammed up the current of his anger—and, during the few moments he still remained afterwards, his temper was fiercely tried by witnessing the courtesy of her manner to the stranger, and the apparent intimacy which subsisted between them. "I ought to have known it," was the expression he muttered over and over to himself—"I ought to have known it! That fellow's gay jacket and plumed hat are dearer to her woman's heart, than the rude devotion of such as I am. Curses be on them, they carry persecution through every thing—house, home, country, rank, wealth, station—ay, the very affection of our kindred they grudge us! Was slavery ever like this?" And with these bitter words, the offspring of bitterer thoughts, he strode down the causeway, and reached the high road. The snow was falling fast—a chilling north wind drove the thin flakes along—but he heeded it not. The fire of anger that burned within his bosom defied all sense of winter's cold; and with a throbbing brow, and fevered hand, he went, turning from time to time to look up at the old castle, whence he expected each moment to see Travers take his departure. Now he hurried eagerly onward, as if to reach some destined spot—now he would stop, and retrace his steps, irresolutely, as though half determined to return home.

"Degraded, insulted, outraged on the very hearth of my father's house!" cried he, aloud, as he wrung his hands in agony, and gave his passion vent. Again he pressed forward, and at last arrived at that part of the glen, where the road seems escarped between the two mountains, which rise several hundred feet, like walls, on either side. Here he paused, and after examining the spot for some seconds, he muttered to himself, "He has no choice here, but stand or turn!" and so saying, he drew from the breast of his coat two pistols, examined the priming of each, and then replaced them. The prospect of speedy revenge seemed to have calmed his vindictive spirit, for now he continued to walk backwards and forwards, at a slow pace,

like a sentinel on his post, pausing occasionally to listen if a horse's hoofs could be heard upon the road, and then resuming his walk once more. A rustling sound in the brushwood above his head once startled him, but the granite cliffs that overhung the road prevented his seeing from what it proceeded, and his heart was now bent on a very different object than the pursuit of the deer. At that moment, the proudest of the herd might have grazed in safety, within pistol-shot of him, and he had not deigned to notice it. Thus passed an hour—a second—and a third succeeded—and, already, the dull shadows of approaching night were falling—yet, no one came. Tortured with strange conjectures, Mark saw the day waning, and yet no sight nor sound of him he looked for. Let not poets speak of the ardent longing of a lover's heart, as in throbbing eagerness he waits for her, whose smile is life, and hope, and heaven. Compared with the mad impatience of him who thirsts for vengeance, his passion is but sluggish apathy. It is the bad, that ever calls forth the sternest energies of human nature. It is in crime, that men transcend the common attributes of mankind. Here was one, now, who would have given his right hand beneath the axe, for but one brief moment of vengeance, and have deemed years of suffering cheaply bought, for the mere presence of his enemy before him.

"He must have guessed my meaning when I left the room;" was the taunting expression he now uttered, as his unsated anger took the shape of an insolent depreciation of his adversary. "An Irishman would not need a broader hint!"

It grew darker—the mountains frowned heavily beneath the canopy of clouds, and night was rapidly approaching, when, from the gloom of his almost extinguished hope, Mark was suddenly aroused. He heard the tramp of a horse's feet; the dull reverberation on the deep snow filled the air, and sometimes they seemed to come from the opposite part of the glen, when the pace slackened, and, at last, the sounds became almost inaudible.

"There is yet enough of daylight, if we move into the broad road," was Mark's soliloquy, as he stooped his ear to listen—and at the instant, he beheld a man leading his horse by the bridle, while he himself seemed seeking along the road-side, where the snow-drift had not yet fallen, as if for some lost object. A glance, even by the imperfect light, and at some thirty paces off, showed Mark it was not him he sought, and were it not that the attitude attracted his curiosity, he had not wasted a second look on him; but the horseman by this time had halted, and was scraping with his whip-handle amid the pebbles of the mountain rivulet.

"I'll never see it again—it's no use!" was the exclamation of the seeker, as he gathered up his reins, and prepared to mount.

"Is that Lanty Lawler?" cried Mark, as he recognised the voice; "I say, did you meet with a young officer riding down the glen, in the direction of Carrig-na-curra?"

"No, indeed, Mr. Mark—I never saw living thing since I left Bantry."

The young man paused for a few seconds—and then, as if anxious to turn all thought from his question, said, "What have you lost thereabouts?"

"Oh, more than I am worth in the world!" was the answer, in a deep, heart-drawn sigh—"but, blessed heaven! what's the pistols for? Oh, Master Mark, dear—sure—sure——"

"Sure what?" cried the youth, with a hoarse laugh—"Sure, I'm not turned highway robber! Is that what you want to say? Make your mind easy, Lanty—I have not reached that point yet; though, if indifference to life might tempt a man, I'd not say it is so far off."

"'Tis a duel, then," cried Lanty quickly; "but, I hope you wouldn't fight without seconds. Oh, that's downright murder—what did he do to you?—was it one of the fellows you met in Cork?"

"You are all wrong," said Mark, sullenly. "It is enough, however, that neither of us seem to have found what he was seeking. You have your secret; I have mine.

"Oh, faix, mine is soon told—'twas my pocket-book, with as good as seventy pounds in goold, I lost here, a three weeks ago, and never set eyes on it since; and there was papers in it—ay, faix, papers of great value—and I darn't face Father Luke without them. I may leave the country, when he hears what happened."

"Where are you going now?" said Mark, gloomily.

"I'm going as far as Mary's, for the night. Maybe you'd step down there, and take a bit of supper? When the moon rises, the night will take up fine."

The young man turned without speaking, and bent his steps in the direction Lanty was travelling.

The horse-dealer was too well versed in human nature to press for a confidence, which he foresaw would be, at last, willingly extended to him; he therefore walked along at Mark's side, without uttering a word, and seeming to be absorbed in his own deep musings. His calculation was a correct one. They had not gone many paces forward, when young O'Donoghue unburthened his whole heart to him—told him, with all the eloquent energy of a wounded spirit, of the insult he had received

in his own home, before his younger brother's face. He omitted nothing in his description of the overbearing impertinence of Frederic Travers's manner—with what cool assurance he had entered the house, and with what flippant carelessness he treated his cousin Kate.

"I left home, with an oath, not to return thither unavenged," said he, "nor will I, though this time luck seems against me. Had he but come, I should have given him his choice of pistols, and his own distance. My hand is true from five paces to thirty; but he has not escaped me yet."

Lanty never interrupted the narrative, except to ask from time to time some question, the answer to which was certain to develope the deeper indignation of the youth. A low muttering commentary, intended to mean a heartfelt sympathy with his wrongs, was all he suffered to escape his lips; and, thus encouraged in his passionate vehemence, Mark's wrath became like a phrenzy.

"Come in now," said Lanty, as he halted at the door of Mary's cabin, "but don't say a word about this business. I have a thought in my head that may do you good service, but keep a fair face before people—do you mind me?"

There was a tone of secrecy and mystery in these words Mark could not penetrate; but, however dark their meaning, they seemed to promise some hope of that revenge his heart yearned after, and with this trust he entered the house.

Mary received them with her wonted hospitality—Lanty was an expected guest—and showed how gratified she felt to have young O'Donoghue beneath her roof.

"I was afeard you were forgetting me entirely, Mr. Mark," said she—"you passed the door twice, and never as much as said, God save you, Mary."

"I did not forget you, for all that, Mary," said he, feelingly. "I have too few friends in the world to spare any of them; but I've had many things on my mind lately."

"Well, and to be sure you had, and why wouldn't you? 'Tis no shame of you to be sad and down-hearted—an O'Donoghue of the ould stock—the best blood in Kerry, wandering about by himself, instead of being followed by a troop of servants, with a goold coat-of-arms worked on their coats, like your grandfather's men—the heavens be his bed. Thirty-eight mounted men, armed, ay and well armed, were in the saddle after him, the day the English general came down here to see the troops that was quartered at Bantry."

"No wonder we should go afoot now," said Mark, bitterly.

"Well, well—it's the will of God," ejaculated Mary, piously; "and who knows what's in store for you yet?"

"That's the very thing I do be telling him," said Lanty, who only waited for the right moment to chime in with the conversation. "There's fine times coming."

Mary stared at the speaker with the eager look of one who wished to derive a meaning deeper than the mere words seemed to convey, and then, checking her curiosity at a gesture from Lanty, she set about arranging the supper, which only awaited his arrival.

Mark ate but little of the fare before him, though Mary's cookery was not without its temptations; but of the wine—and it was strong Burgundy—he drank freely. Goblet after goblet he drained with that craving desire to allay a thirst, which is rather the symptom of a mind fevered by passion than by malady. Still, as he drank, no sign of intoxication appeared; on the contrary, his words evinced a tone of but deeper resolution, and a more settled purpose than at first, when he told how he had promised never to leave his father, although all his hopes pointed to the glorious career a foreign service would open before him.

"It was a good vow you made, and may the saints enable you to keep it," said Mary.

"And for the matter of glory, maybe there's some to be got nearer home, and without travelling to look for it," interposed Lanty.

"What do you mean?" said Mark, eagerly.

"Fill your glass. Take the big one, for it's a toast I'm going to give you—are you ready? Here now, then—drink—

'A stout heart and mind,
And an easterly wind,
And the Devil behind
The Saxon."

Mark repeated the doggerel as well as he was able, and pledged the only sentiment he could divine, that of the latter part, with all his enthusiasm.

"You may tell him what you plaze, now," whispered Mary in Lanty's ear; for her ready wit perceived that his blood was warmed by the wine, and his heart open for any communication.

Lanty hesitated but a second, then drawing his chair close to Mark's, he said—

"I'm going now to put my life in your hands, but I can't help it. When Ireland is about to strike for liberty, it is not an O'Donoghue should be last in the ranks. Swear to me you'll never mention again what I'll tell you—swear it on the book." Mary, at the same moment, placed in his hand a breviary, with a gilt cross on the binding, which Mark took reverently, and kissed twice. "That's enough—your word would do me, but I must obey them that's over me; and

so saying, Lanty at once proceeded to lay before the astonished mind of young O'Donoghue, the plan of France for an invasion of Ireland—not vaguely nor imperfectly, not in the mere language of rumour or chance allusion, but with such aids to circumstance and time, as gave him the appearance of one conversant with what he spoke on. The restoration of Irish independence—the resumption of forfeited estates—the return of the real nobility of the land to their long-lost position of eminence and influence, were themes he descanted upon with consummate skill, bringing home each fact to the actual effect such changes would work in the youth's own condition, who, no longer degraded to the rank of a mere peasant, would once again assert his own rightful station, and stand forth at the head of his vast property—the heir of an honoured name and house. Lanty knew well, and more too, implicitly believed in all the plausible pretension of French sympathy for Irish suffering, which formed the cant of the day. He had often heard the arguments in favour of the success of such an expedition—in fact, the reasons for which its failure was deemed impossible. These he repeated fluently, giving to his narrative the semblance of an incontestible statement, and then he told him that from Brest to Dublin was "fifty hours' sail, with a fair wind"—that same "easterly breeze," the toast alluded to, that the French could throw thirty, nay, fifty thousand troops into Ireland, yet never weaken their own army to any extent worth speaking of—that England was distracted by party spirit, impoverished by debt, and totally unable to repel invasion, and, in fact, that if Ireland would be but "true to herself," her success was assured.

He told, too, how Irishmen were banded together in a sworn union to assert the independence of their country, and that such as held back, or were reluctant in the cause, would meet the fate of enemies. On the extent and completeness of the organization, he dwelt with a proud satisfaction, but when he spoke of large masses of men trained to move and act together, Mark suddenly interrupted him, saying—

"Yes, I have seen them. It's not a week since some hundreds marched through this glen at midnight."

"Ay, that was Holt's party," said Mary, composedly; "and fine men they are."

"They were unarmed," said Mark.

"If they were, it is because the general didn't want their weapons."

"There's arms enough to be had when the time comes for using them," broke in Mary.

"Wouldn't you show him—" and Lanty hesitated to conclude a speech, the imprudence of which he was already aware of.

"Ay will I," said Mary. "I never mistrusted one of his name;" and with that, she rose from the fire-side, and took a candle in her hand. "Come here a minute, Master Mark." Unlocking a small door in the back wall of the cabin, she entered a narrow passage which led to the stable, but off which, a narrow door, scarcely distinguishable from the wall, conducted into a spacious vault, excavated in the solid rock. Here were a vast number of packing-cases and boxes, piled on each other, from floor to roof, together with hogsheads and casks of every shape and size. Some of the boxes had been opened, and the lids laid loosely over them. Removing one of these, Mary pointed to the contents, as she said—

"There they are—French muskets and carabines. There's pistols in that case; and all them, over there, is swords and cutlasses. 'Tis pike-heads that's in the other corner; and the casks has saddles and holsters and them kind of things."

Mark stooped down and took up one of the muskets. It was a light and handy weapon, and bore on its stock the words—"Armée de la Sambre et Meuse"—for none of the weapons were new.

"These are all French," said he, after a brief pause.

"Every one of them," replied Mary, proudly; "and there's more coming from the same place."

"And why can we not fight our own battles, without aid from France?" said Mark, boldly. "If we really are worthy of independence, are we not able to win it?"

"Because there's traitors among us," said Mary—replying before Lanty could interpose—"because there's traitors that would turn again us if we were not sure of victory; but when they see we have the strong hand, as well as the good cause, they'll be sure to stand on the safe side."

"I don't care for that," said Mark. "I want no such allies as these. I say, if we deserve our liberty, we ought to be strong enough to take it."

"There's many think the same way as yourself," said Lanty, quietly. "I heard the very words you said from one of the delegates last week. But I don't see any harm in getting help from a friend, when the odds is against you."

"But I do; and great harm too. What's the price of the assistance?—tell me that."

"Oh, make your mind easy on that score. The French hate the English, whether they love us or no."

"And why wouldn't they love us," said Mary, half angry at such

a supposition, "and we all Catholics? Don't we both belong to the ould ancient church? and didn't we swear to destroy the heretics wherever we'd find them? Ay, and we will, too!"

"I'm with you, whatever come of it," said Mark, after a few seconds of thought. "I'm with you; and if the rest have as little to live for, trust me, they'll not be pleasant adversaries."

Overjoyed at this bold avowal, which consummated the success they desired, they led Mark back into the cabin, and pledged, in a bumper, the "raal O'Donoghue."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RETURN OF THE ENVOY.

Sir Marmaduke Travers and his daughter had passed a morning of great uneasiness at the delay in Frederic's return. Noon came, and yet no appearance of him. They wandered along the road, hoping to meet him, and at last turned homeward with the intention of despatching a servant towards Carrig-na-curra, fearing lest he should have missed his way. This determination, however, they abandoned, on being told by a countryman, that he had seen the horse young Travers rode still standing at the gate of the "castle."

A feeling of curiosity to hear his son's account of the O'Donoghues, mingled with the old man's excitement at his absence; and, as the day declined, and still no sign of his return, he walked every now and then to the door, and looked anxiously along the road by which he expected his approach. Sybella, too, was not without her fears, and though vague and undefined, she dreaded a possible collision between the hot-blood of Mark and her brother. The evening of her first arrival was ever present to her mind; and she often thought of what might have then occurred, had Frederic been present.

They had wearied themselves with every mode of accounting for his delay, guessed at every possible cause of detention, and were at length on the point of sending a messenger in search of him, when they heard the tramp of a horse coming, not along the high road, but, as it seemed,

over the fields in front of them. A few minutes more of anxious expectancy, and Frederic, with his horse splashed and panting, alighted beside them.

"Well, you certainly have a very pretty eye for a country, father," said he, gaily. "That same line you advised, has got three as rasping fences as I should like to meet with."

"What do you mean, boy?" said Sir Marmaduke, as much puzzled at the speech as the reader himself may feel.

"Simply, sir, that though the cob is a capital horse, and has a great jump in him, that I'd rather have day-light for that kind of thing; and I really believe the ragged fellow you sent for me, chose the stiffest places. I saw the rascal grinning when I was coming up to the mill-stream."

"Messenger!—ragged fellow! The boy is dreaming."

"My dear Frederic, we sent no messenger. We were, indeed, very anxious at your delay, but we did not despatch any one to meet you."

Frederic stared at both the speakers, and then repeated, in astonishment, the last words—"Sent no messenger!" but when they once more assured him of the fact, he gave the following account of his return:—

"It was very late when I left the castle. I delayed there the whole day; but scarcely had I reached the high-road, when a wild-looking fellow, with a great pole in his hand, came up to me, and cried out,

"'Are you for the Lodge?' 'Yes,' said he, answering himself, 'you are her brother. I'm sent over to tell you, not to go back by the road, for the bridge is down; but you're to come over the fields, and I'll show you the way.'"

"Supposing the fellow was what he assumed to be—your messenger, I followed him; and, by George, it was no joking matter; for he leaped like a deer, and seemed to take uncommon pleasure in pitting himself against the cob. I should have given up the contest, I confess, but that the knave had me in his power. For, when it grew dark, I knew not which way to head, until, at length, he shouted out—

"'There's the Lodge now, where you see the light.' And after that, what became of himself I cannot tell you."

"It was Terry, poor Terry," cried Sybella.

"Yes, it must have been Terry," echoed her father.

"And is this Terry retained to play Will-o'-the-Wisp?" asked Fred; "or is it a piece of amateurship?"

But both Sir Marmaduke and Sybella were too deeply engaged in canvassing the motive for this strange act, to pay due attention to his question.

As Frederic was but little interested in his guide, nor mindful of what became of him, they were not able to obtain any clue from him as to what road he took; nor what chance there was of overtaking him.

"So then this was a piece of 'politesse,' for which I am indebted to your friend Terry's own devising," said Fred, half angrily. "The fellow had better keep out of my way in future."

"You will not harm him, Fred, you never could, when I tell you of his gallant conduct here."

"My sweet sister, I am really wearied of this eternal theme—I have heard of nothing but heroism since my arrival. Once for all, I concede the matter, and am willing to believe of the Irish, as of the family of Bayard, that all the men are brave—and all the women virtuous. And now, let us to dinner."

"You have told us nothing of your visit to the enchanted castle, Fred," said his sister, when the servants had withdrawn, and they were once more alone; "and I am all impatience to hear of your adventures there."

"I confess, too," said Sir Marmaduke, "I am not devoid of curiosity on the subject—let us hear it all."

"I have little to recount," said Frederic, with some hesitation in his manner; "I neither saw the O'Donoghue, as they call him, nor his brother-in-law—the one was in bed, the other had gone to visit some sick person on the mountain. But I made acquaintance with your preux-chevalier, Sybella: a fine-looking young fellow, even now wasted with sickness; he was there with an elder brother, an insolent kind of personage—half peasant, all bully."

"He was not wanting in proper respect to *you*," said Sir Marmaduke. "I trust, Mark, he was aware of who you were?"

"Faith, sir, I fancy he cared very little on the subject; and had I been a much more important individual, he would have treated me in the same way—a way, to say the least of it, not over-burthened with courtesy."

"Had you any words together, boy?" said Sir Marmaduke, with an evident anxiety in his look and voice.

"A mere interchange of greeting," replied Fred, laughing, "in which each party showed his teeth, but did not bite withal. I unhappily mistook him for a game-keeper—and worse still, told him so, and he felt proportionably angry at the imputation—preferring, probably, to be thought a poacher. He is a rude coarse fellow," said he with a changed voice, "with pride to be a gentleman—but not breeding nor manner to enact the character."

"The visit was, after all, not an agreeable one," said Miss Travers, "and I am only surprised how you came to prolong it. You spent the whole day there."

Although there was not the slightest degree of suspicion insinuated by this remark, Fred stole a quick glance at his sister, to see if she really intended more than the mere words implied. Then, satisfied that she had not, he said in a careless way—

"Oh, the weather broke; it came on a heavy snow-storm; and as the younger brother pressed me to remain, and I had no fancy to face the hurricane, I sat down to a game of chess."

"Chess! Indeed, Fred, that sounds very humanizing. And how did he play?"

"It was not with him I played," answered he, hesitatingly.

"What—with the elder?"

"No, nor him either; my antagonist was a cousin—I think they called her cousin."

"Called *her*," said Sybella, slyly. "So then, Master Fred, there was a lady in the case. Well, we certainly have been a long while coming to her."

"Yes, she has lately arrived—a day or two ago—from some convent in the Low Countries, where she has lived since she was a child."

"A strange home for her," interposed Sir Marmaduke. "If I do not misconceive them greatly, they must be very unsuitable associates for a young lady educated in a French convent."

"So you would say, if you saw her," said Fred, seizing with avidity at the opening, then offered, to coincide with an opinion he was half afraid to broach. "She is perfectly foreign in look, dress, and demeanour—with all the mannerism of Paris life, graceful and pleasing in her address; and they, at least one of them, a downright boor—the other, giving him credit for good looks and good nature, yet immeasurably *her* inferior in every respect."

"Is she pretty, Frederic?" said Sybella, not lifting her eyes from her work as she spoke.

"I should say pretty," replied he, with hesitation, as if qualifying his praise by a word which did not imply too much. "I prefer a quieter style of beauty, for my own part; less dazzle, less sparkling effect; something to see every day, and to like the better the more one sees it"—and he placed his arm around his sister's waist, and gazed at her as if to give the interpretation to his speech.

"You have made me quite curious to see her, Fred," said Sybella. "The very fact of finding one like her in such a place has its interest."

"What if you were to visit her, my dear?" said Sir Marmaduke; "the attention would only be a proper one; you have books and music here, besides, which she might be glad to have in a region so remote as this."

Frederic never spoke a word, but anxiously awaited his sister's answer.

"I should like it greatly; what says Fred to the notion?"

"I see nothing against it," replied he, with a well-affected indifference. "She is a most lady-like person; and, if it be your intention to pass a few weeks longer in this solitude, would be of infinite value for companionship."

"A few weeks longer!—I shall remain till Christmas, boy," said his father, with determination. "I have taken a fancy to Ireland; and my intention is to go up to Dublin for a few months in winter, and return here in the spring."

This was at once approaching the very subject which Frederic had journeyed to determine; but, whether it was that the time seemed unfavourable, or that his own ideas in the matter had undergone some modification since his arrival, he contented himself with simply a doubtful shake of the head, as if distrusting Sir Marmaduke's firmness, and did not endeavour to oppose his determination by a single argument of any kind. On the contrary, he listened with patience, and even seeming interest to his father's detailed account of his project—how he had already given orders to secure a house in Stephen's-green for the winter, intending to make acquaintances with the gentry of the capital, and present himself and his daughter at the viceregal court.

"Sybella may as well make her debut in society here as in London," said Sir Marmaduke. "Indeed I am not sure but the provincial boards are the best for a first appearance. In any case, such is the line I have laid down for myself; and if it only secured me against a sea voyage to England in such a season, I shall be amply repaid for my resolve."

Against the season of his return, too, Sir Marmaduke hoped to make such additions to the Lodge as should render it more comfortable as a residence; various plans for which were heaped upon the library table, and littered the chairs about the room.

Miss Travers had already given her hearty concurrence to all her father's schemes, and seconded, most ably, every one of his views by such arguments as she was possessed of; so that Frederic, even if disposed to record his opposition, saw that the present was not an opportune moment; and prudently reserved for another time, what, if unsuccessful now, could never be recurred to with advantage.

The conversation on these topics lasted long. They discussed with interest every detail of their plans; for so it is—the pleasures of castle building are inexhaustible, and the very happiest realities of life are poor and vague, compared with the resources provided by our hopes and fancies. The slightest grounds of probability are enough to form a foundation—but there is no limit to the superstructure we raise above.

In the indulgence of this view, they continued to chat till a late hour, and parted for the night in high good humour with each other—a visit to the O'Donoghue being the plan for the succeeding day's accomplishment.

CHAPTER XXII.

A MORNING VISIT.

On the afternoon of the following day, Sir Marmaduke, accompanied by his son and daughter, bent their steps towards the castle of the O'Donoghue. The day was a fine and bright one, with a blue sky above, and a hard frosty surface on the earth beneath, and made walking as pleasant as open air and exercise can render it. The carriage was ordered to meet them on their return; less, indeed, on account of the distance, than that the shortness of the day made the precaution reasonable.

Chatting agreeably, on they went. The time slipped rapidly away. Now, adverting to the bold and majestic scenery around them—now, speaking of the people, their habits, their prejudices, and their leanings, or anon discussing the O'Donoghue family, which, of all the puzzling themes the land presented, was certainly not the least embarrassing to them.

"We must think of some means of evincing our gratitude to this boy, Fred," said Sir Marmaduke, in a whisper. "You appear to have found the matter more difficult than you anticipated."

"Very true, sir. In the early part of my visit, it was rendered impossible, by the interruption of the elder brother; and, in the latter part, somehow, I believe, I—I actually begin to fear, I forgot it

altogether. However, I have thought of one thing; and it should be done without a moment's loss of time. You must write to Carden, the law agent, and stop any proceedings Hemsworth may have begun against these people. It would be most disgraceful to think that, while professing sentiments of good feeling and friendliness, we were using the arm of the law to harass and distress them."

"I'll do it at once, Fred—by this night's post. In truth, I never understood the point at issue between us; nor can I clearly see Hemsworth's reason for the summary course he has taken with them. There must be more in it than I know of."

"The castle stands proudly, as seen from this point," said Sybella, who felt somewhat wearied of a conversation maintained in a voice too low for her to hear; and the remark had the effect of recalling them to other thoughts, in discussing which, they arrived at the old keep of Carrig-na-curra.

Whether recent events had sharpened Kerry O'Leary to a more acute sense of his duties as butler, or that Kate O'Donoghue had exerted some influence in bringing about so desirable an object, we know not; but at the very first summons of the hall-door bell, he made his appearance, his ordinary costume being augmented, if not improved, by a pair of very unweldy top-boots of his master's, which reached somewhere to the middle of the thigh, and were there met by a green velvet waistcoat, from the same wardrobe, equally too large and voluminous for its present owner.

Visitors at the O'Donoghue house were generally of a character which Kerry felt necessary to close the door against. They unhappily came, not with the ceremonial of a visiting card, but with some formidable missive of the law, in the shape of a distress warrant—a latitat—or that meeker and less-dreaded engine, a protested bill. It was, then, with a considerable relief to his anxieties, that his eye caught the flutter of a lady's dress, as he peeped from the small casement beside the door, and his heart expanded in a little thanksgiving of its own, as he unbarred the portal to admit her.

Having informed his visitors that the family were at home, he preceded them to the drawing-room, with a step, the noise of which happily drowned the tittering it was impossible to subdue, at beholding him. To prevent the awkwardness which Sir Marmaduke foresaw might arise, from the blundering announcement Kerry would inevitably make of their names, he having repeated over and over as he went along, by way of refreshing his memory, "Sir Marmaduke, Sir Marmaduke Travers," the old gentleman stepped forward as the door opened, and presented himself by name, introducing his daughter at the same time.

The O'Donoghue, seated in his chair, half rose, for it was one of his gouty days, and he could not stir without great difficulty, and with an air and voice which bespoke the gentleman, welcomed his guests.

Herbert's eyes gleamed with delight as he gazed on the party; and Sir Archibald, bowing with an ancient grace that would have suited a courtier of a century previous, presented chairs to each, going through the ceremonial of a new obeisance to every one of the group. Kate O'Donoghue was not in the room, nor Mark—the latter, indeed, had not returned to the castle since the day previous.

The ordinary greetings over, and Sir Marmaduke having expressed, in well-chosen phrase, the gratitude he had so long laboured to acquit, the conversation became easy and agreeable. Sir Marmaduke, seating himself next O'Donoghue, had entered into a discussion of the state of the country and the people—Frederic, beside Herbert's chair, was conversing with the boy by lively sallies and pleasant stories, that flowed the more rapidly as the listener was an eager one; while Sir Archibald, standing in an attitude of respectful attention, had engaged Miss Travers in a conversation about the glen and its scenery, to which his own correct taste and thorough appreciation of the picturesque, gave a charm and piquancy that already interested her deeply. So naturally easy and unaffected was the tone of their reception, that all astonishment at finding their host so superior to their anticipation, was merged in the pleasure that Travers felt in the interview. The good-tempered heartiness of the O'Donoghue himself—his frank speech, his ready humour, won each moment more and more on Sir Marmaduke. Frederic, too, never grew wearied of the fresh and joyous spirit which gleamed out at every look and word from Herbert, whose ardent temperament and high-hearted nature caught up the enthusiasm of a spirit like his own; and, as for Sybella, the charm of Sir Archy's manner, whose perfection was its adaptation to the society of ladies, delighted her greatly, and she soon forgot any slight inclination to smile at the precision of language, where deep sound sense and high feeling were conveyed, with only the fault of pedantry. While thus agreeably engaged on all sides, the door opened, and Kate entered, but so noiselessly withal, that she was in the midst of the party, before they knew of her approach. Recognising Frederic Travers with a gracious smile, she received Sir Marmaduke's salutation with a deep courtesy, and then, as if similarity of years required a less ceremonious introduction, took her seat beside Miss Travers, with an air of mingled kindness and cordiality she so well knew how to assume. As in an orchestra, amid the swell of many instruments, where deep-toned thunders mingle with sounds of softer

influence, some one strain will rise, from time to time, suggestive of feelings apart from the rest, with higher and nobler sympathies around it, so did her voice, heard among the others, sound thus sweetly. Her words came winged with a fine expression, which look and gesture could alone give them—and in the changing colour of her cheek, her brilliant brow, her lips, even in silence eloquent, there was a character of loveliness as much above mere beauty, as life transcends the marble. The more perfect regularity of Sybella's features—their classic outline—their chaste correctness in every line and lineament—seemed cold and inanimate when contrasted with the more expressive loveliness of Kate O'Donoghue. The fearless character of her mind, too, was blended with so much of womanly delicacy and refinement—the wish to please, so associated with a seeming forgetfulness of self, that every act and every gesture teemed with a charm of interest, for which there is no word, save "fascination;" even that slightly foreign accent, of which we have already spoken, served to individualize all she said, and left it graven on the heart long after the words were spoken.

Frederic Travers watched with eager delight the effect these gifts were producing upon his sister. He saw the pleasure with which Sybella listened; he recognised, even already, the symptoms of that conquest by which mind subdues mind, and was overjoyed as he looked.

To Sir Marmaduke's gracefully-expressed hope, that this visit should form the prelude to their nearer intimacy, the O'Donoghue, with a touch of sadness in his voice, replied—that he himself was an invalid, whose steps never wandered beyond the precincts of his home; but his brother-in-law, and his niece, and the boys—they would all, he was certain, avail themselves of such a neighbourhood.

Sir Archibald bowed low, and somewhat stiffly perhaps, in accordance with a pledge thus given without his concurrence; but Herbert's bright eyes grew brighter, and his cheek flushed with delight at the bare anticipation of the thought.

"And you, Miss O'Donoghue," said Sir Marmaduke, turning towards Kate. "Our humble library at the lodge, is perfectly at your service, the only condition we ask is, that you come and choose from it in person."

"That promise is already most kindly made, father," interrupted Sybella, whose pleased look showed how she had been captivated by her new friend.

While their smiles and gracious words went round, the door was suddenly opened by Kerry O'Leary, who, forgetful of the visiters, in his eager anxiety as the bearer of news, cried out—

"There's a shindy, master dear! Such a row! May I never die in sin, if ever I seen the equal of it!"

"What does he mean?—is the fellow mad?" cried the O'Donoghue, angrily, while Sir Archy, bending on him a most ominous frown, muttered—

"Have ye lost a' decency together. Ye daft loon, what ails ye?"

"I ax your pardon, and the qualities pardon," said Kerry, with an expression of abject misery for his unceremonious 'entrée.' "But, if you seen it, sorra bit but you'd forgive me."

"There has been good fun somewhere, I'm certain," cried out Frederick Travers, whose curiosity to learn Kerry's intelligence could no longer be repressed.

"What is it, then, Kerry?" said the O'Donoghue. "Let us hear it all."

"'Tis Master Mark, good luck to him," cried Kerry, overjoyed at the permission to speak out freely. "He was over at Ballyvourney with the greyhounds, when he seen that dirty spalpeen, Sam Wylie, wid a process-sarver along wid him, noticin' the tenants. The server was a stranger, and he didn't touch him; but he made the boys put Sam on Nick Malone's mule, and give him a fair start, and they run him down the mountain, with a fine view, and ran into him here at the horse-pond, where the mule flung him head over heels; and begorra, you wouldn't know 'twas a Christian, if you seen him this minit dripping wet, and the duck-weed all hanging round him—and he's running still—for he thinks Master Mark will take the life of him before he stops."

A roar of laughter from Frederic, joined in by Herbert, and at last by the O'Donoghue himself, for some moments prevented a word of commentary on this outrageous proceeding, when Sir Marmaduke, rising slowly, said—

"I am a stranger here, very ignorant of the country and its habits; but I have yet to learn that any man, in the just discharge of his duty, should be thus treated. I call upon you, sir, to investigate this affair, and if it be, as we have heard it, to make reparation——"

"Ye hae muckle reason for what ye say, sir," interposed Sir Archy; "but the freaks and follies o' young men hae a license here, I doubt ye are na used to."

"Ill lay my life on it, Mark was right," called out the O'Donoghue. "The boy never makes any mistake in these matters."

"If the fellow were insolent," said Frederic, "your son has served him properly."

Kate smiled at the speaker a look of gratitude, which amply repaid him for coming thus promptly to the rescue.

"It may be so," said Sir Marmaduke, happy at such a means of escaping from a further prosecution of a most unpleasant topic.

"The captain's guessed it well," cried Kerry. "The spalpeen tould Master Mark that he'd be up here to-morrow wid a notice from the master himself, and it would go hard but he'd see us out of the place before Easter."

"Is this possible!" said Sir Marmaduke, blushing deeply. "I beg, my dear sir, that you will forgive any hasty expression I may have used."

"I can forgive the lad myself," said Sir Archy, proudly.

"Not I, then, uncle," interposed Kate. "Not I. Mark should have horsewhipped the fellow within an inch of his life."

Sybella Travers started at the energy of voice and manner which accompanied these words; while the O'Donoghue, rising from his chair, came slowly across the hearth, and imprinted a kiss upon Kate's forehead."

"You're one of the raal stock—there's no denying it," muttered Kerry, as he gazed on her with an expression of almost worship. "'Tis blood that never gives in—devil a lie in it!"

Herbert, who alone had witnessed the unfriendly meeting between his brother and young Travers, turned a pleasant smile at the latter, as he half whispered—

"This was very kind of *you*."

It would have been a difficult—nay, an almost impossible task, to recall the tone and temper of the party, previous to this unhappy interruption. All Sir Marmaduke's efforts to resume the conversation had lost their former ease—the O'Donoghue himself was disconcerted; for he was not quite certain what were Sir Marmaduke's words on the occasion, and how far he should feel called upon to demand a retractation, and Sir Archibald, fretful and annoyed at the impression Mark's conduct would convey of the habits and temper of the house, felt his task a severe one, to assume an air of serenity and quietude.

Frederic Travers alone seemed happy and delighted. The sudden expression of Kate O'Donoghue's opinion, so utterly unlike anything he had ever heard before from a young lady's lips, took him as much by surprise as the spirit pleased him; and he would willingly have engaged to horsewhip a dozen process-servers, for another glance o her flashing eyes, as she delivered the words; while Sybella could not help a sentiment bordering on fear, for one who, young as herself, gifted with every womanly

attitude of grace and loveliness, had yet evinced a degree of impetuosity and passion she could not reconcile with such attractions. As for Kate, the sentiment had evoked no stir within her bosom. It was a wish, as naturally expressed as it was felt; and all the surprise the others experienced at her words would have been nothing to her own, to have known of their astonishment.

The visit soon came to a termination, and Sir Marmaduke, having succeeded in a great degree, in restoring the favourable impression he had at first obtained, took his leave of the O'Donoghue, and then, addressing Sir Archy, said—

"You, sir, I rejoice to learn, are not an invalid. May I expect the happiness of seeing you sometimes?"

Sir Archy bowed deeply, and, with a motion of his hand towards Miss Travers, replied—

"I have already made an engagement here, sir."

"Yes," said Sybella, to whom this speech seemed half addressed, "Sir Archibald has been kind enough to offer me his guidance up the glen, where there are several points of view finer than any I have seen."

Emboldened by the success of these advances, Sir Marmaduke, with a courtesy he was perfect master of, requested the party would not delay their kind intentions, but favour him with their company on the following day

It is doubtful whether Sir Archy might not have declined a more formal invitation; but there seemed something so frank in the abruptness of the present, that he acceded at once; and Kate having also pledged herself to accompany him, their greetings were interchanged, and they parted.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SOME OPPOSITE TRAITS OF CHARACTER.

It may seem strange and almost paradoxical—but so it was—Kate O'Donoghue's presence appeared to have wrought a most magical change in the whole household of the O'Donoghue. The efforts they

themselves made to ward off the semblance of their fallen estate, induced a happier frame of mind than that which resulted from daily brooding over their misfortunes; the very struggle elicited a courage they had left long in disuse; and the cheerfulness which at first was but assumed, grew gradually more and more natural. To the O'Donoghue, who, for many a day, desired no more than to fend off the evil in his own brief time; who, with the selfishness of an old age passed in continual conflict with poverty, only sought a life interest in their bettered fortunes, she was a boon above all price. Her light step, her lighter laugh, her mirthful tone of conversation, with its many anecdotes and stories of places and people he had not heard of before, were resources against gloom that never failed.

Sir Archy, too, felt a return to the old associations of his youth, in the presence of a young, beautiful, and accomplished girl, whose gracefulness and elegance threw a halo around her as she went, and made of that old and crumbling tower, dark with neglect, and sad with time, a salon, teeming with its many appliances against depression, where she herself, armed with so many fascinations, dispensed cheerfulness and bliss on all about her. Nor was he selfish in all this. He marked with delight the impression made upon his favourite Herbert, by his cousin's attractive manners. How insensibly, as it were, the boy was won from ruder pursuits, and coarser pleasures, to sit beside her as she sung, or near her as she read; with what interest he pursued his lessons in French, beneath her tuition, and the ardour with which he followed every plan of study suggested by her. Sir Archibald saw all these things, and calculated on their result with accuracy. He foresaw how Kate's attractive gifts would throw into the shade the ruder tastes the boy's condition in life might expose him to adopt, and thus aid him in the great object of his whole existence—to save him, at least, from the wreck of his house.

Mark alone seemed untouched by her presence; save that the wild excesses of high spirit, to which from time to time he ever gave way, were now gone, and in their place, a deep gloom, a moroseness of character succeeded, rendering him usually silent before her, or sunk in his own saddening reflections. Kate would sometimes adventure to disperse the dark clouds from his mind, but ever without success; he either felt annoyed at being the subject of remark, or left the room; so that at last, she abandoned the effort, hoping that time and its changes would effect what the present denied. Perhaps, too, she had reasons for this hope. More than once, with womanly quickness, had she marked how he had stood with his eye fixed upon her, unconscious of being

seen; how, when about to leave the room, he would loiter about, as if in search of something, but, in reality, to listen to the song she was singing. Still, she showed no sign of having seen these things; but always, in her air towards him, affected a careless ease of manner, as like his own as possible. For days, sometimes for an entire week, he would absent himself from home; and, as he was never submissive to much questioning, his appearance called forth no other remark than some passing observation of what had occurred in his absence, but which drew from him no interchange of confidence.

These symptoms of Mark's altered character made a deeper impression on his father than events of greater moment could have done. He watched every movement and expression of his favourite son, to catch some clue to the change; but all in vain. The young man never, by any accident, alluded to himself: nor did he often now advert to the circumstance of the family difficulties; on the contrary, a lethargic carelessness seemed to brood over him, and he went about like one who had lost all zest for life, and all care for its enjoyments.

The O'Donoghue was too well versed in the character of his son to hope for any elucidation of the mystery by a mere inquiry; so that he was left to speculate on the many causes which might have operated the change, and divine, as well as he was able, the secret grief that affected him. In this pursuit, like all who have long suffered the pressure of a particular calamity, he ever felt disposed to ascribe Mark's suffering to the same cause which produced his own, namely, the fallen fortunes of the house, and the ruin that hung over them. Yet, somehow, of late, matters had taken a turn more favourable. His attorney at Cork had informed him, that from some informality in the proceedings, the ejectment was stopped, at least for the present term. The notices to the tenants not to pay were withdrawn, and the rents came in as before; and the only very pressing evil were the bills, the renewal of which, demanded a considerable sum of ready money. That this one misfortune should occasion a gloom, the accumulated griefs of former days had not done, he could not understand; but, by long musing on the matter, and deep reflection, he at last came to the conviction, that such was the case, and that Mark's sorrow was the greater, from seeing how near they were to a more favourable issue to their affairs, and yet how fatally debarred from such a consummation by this one disastrous circumstance.

The drowning hand grasps not the straw with more avidity than does the harassed and wearied mind, agitated by doubts, and worn out with conjectures, seize upon some one apparent solution to a difficulty that

has long oppressed it, and, for the very moment, convert every passing circumstance into an argument for its truthfulness. The O'Donoghue now saw, or believed he saw, why Mark would never accompany the others in their visits to the "Lodge"—nor be present when any of the Travers family came to the castle; he immediately accounted for his son's rejection of the proffered civilities, by that wounded pride which made him feel his present position so painfully, and, as the future head of the house, grieve over a state so unbecoming to its former fortunes.

"The poor fellow," said he, "is too high-spirited to be a guest to those he cannot be a host. Noble boy! the old blood flows strongly in *your* veins, at least."

How to combat this evil, now became his sole thought. He mused over it by day—he dreamed of it by night. Hour by hour he endured the harassing tortures of a poverty, whose struggles were all abortive, and whose repulses came without ceasing. Each plan he thought of, was met by obstacles innumerable; and when, worn out with unprofitable schemes, he had resolved on abandoning the subject for ever, the sight of Mark's wasted cheek and sunken eye rallied him again to an effort, which, each time, he vowed should be the last.

The old, and often successful remedies to rally him from his low spirits, his father possessed no longer—the indulgence of some caprice, some momentary fancy for a horse or a hound—a boat or a fishing-rod. He felt, besides, that his grief, whatever it was, lay too deep for such surface measures as these, and he pondered long and anxiously over the matter. Nor had he one to share his sorrow, or assist him with advice. Sir Archibald he ever regarded as being prejudiced against Mark, and invariably more disposed to exaggerate, than extenuate his faults. To have opened his heart to him, would be to expose himself to some very plausible, but, as he would deem them, very impracticable remarks, on frugality and order—the necessity of submitting to altered fortunes—and, if need be, of undertaking some humble but honest occupation as a livelihood. These, and such like, had more than once been obtruded upon him; but to seek and court them, to invite their presence, was not to be thought of.

Kerry O'Leary was, then, the only one who remained; and they who know the intimacy to which old servants, long conversant with the fortunes of the family, and deemed faithful, because, from utter inutility, they are attached to the house that shelters them, are admitted in Irish households, will not be surprised at the choice of the confidant. He, I say, was the O'Donoghue's last resource; and from him he still hoped to gain some clue, at least, to the secret of this

mystery. Scarcely had the O'Donoghue retired to his room at night, when Kerry was summoned to his presence, and after a few preliminaries, was asked if he knew where, how, or with whom his young master latterly spent his time.

"Faix, and 'tis that same does be puzzling myself," said Kerry, to whom the matter had already been one of considerable curiosity. "Sometimes I think one thing, and then I think another—but it beats me entirely."

"What were your thoughts, then, Kerry?"

"'Twas Tuesday last I suspected Joe Lenahan's daughter—the fair-haired girl, above at the three meadows; then, I took into my head, it might be a badger he was after—for he was for ever going along by the bank of the river; but, twice in the week, I was sure I had him—and faix, I think, maybe I have."

"How is that, Kerry? Tell me at once, man!"

"It's a fine brown beast Lanty Lawler has—a strapping four-year-old, as likely a weight-carrier as ever I seen—that's what he's after—sorra lie in it. I obsarved him, on Friday, taking him over the big fences beyant the whin-field—and I measured his tracks—and, may I never die in sin, if he didn't stride nineteen feet over the yallow ditch."

"Do you know what he's asking for him, Kerry?" cried the old man, eagerly.

"His weight in goold, I heerd say; for the captain, up at 'the Lodge,' will give him his own price for any beast will make a charger—and three hundred guineas Lanty expects for the same horse. Ayeh! he's a play-actor, is Lanty—and knows how to rub the gentlemen down with a damp wisp."

"And you think that's it, Kerry?"

"I'll take the vestment it's not far off it. I never heerd Master Mark give a cheer out of him going over a fence, that he hadn't a conceit out of the beast under him. 'Whoop!' says he, throwing up his whip hand, 'this way.' 'Your heart's in him,' says I, 'and 'tis a murther he isn't your own."

"You may leave me, Kerry," said the old man, sighing heavily, "'tis getting near twelve o'clock."

"Good night, sir, and a safe rest to you."

"Wait a moment—stay a few minutes. Are they in the drawing-room still?"

"Yes, sir; I heerd Miss Kate singing as I came up the stairs."

"Well, Kerry, I want you to wait till she is leaving the room, and

just whisper to her—mind now, for your life, that nobody sees nor hears you—just say that I wish to see her up here for a few seconds to-night. Do you understand me ?"

"Never fear, sir, I'll do it, and sorra one the wiser."

Kerry left the apartment as he spoke, nor was his master long doomed to suspense, for immediately after a gentle tap at the door announced Kate's presence there.

"Sit down there, my darling Kate," cried the O'Donoghue, placing a chair beside his own, "and let me have five minutes' talk with you."

The young girl obeyed with a smile, and returned the pressure of her uncle's hand with warmth.

"Kate, my child," said he—speaking with evident difficulty and embarrassment, and fixing his eyes, not on her, but towards the fire, as he spoke—"Kate you have come to a sad and cheerless home, with few comforts, with no pleasure for one so young and so lovely as you are."

"My dear uncle, how can you speak thus to me? Can you separate me in your heart from your other children? Mark and Herbert make no complaint—do you think that I could do so ?"

"They are very different from you, my sweet child. The moss rose will not bear the storms of winter, that the wild thorn can brave without danger. To you this dreary house must be a prison. I know it—I feel it."

"Nay, nay, uncle. If you think thus, it must be my fault—some piece of wilfulness of mine could alone have made you suppose me discontented; but I am not so—far from it. I love dear old Sir Archy and my cousins dearly; yes, and my uncle Miles too, though he seems anxious to get rid of me."

The old man pressed her fingers to his lips, and turned away his head.

"Come, Kate," said he, after a brief pause, "it was with no intention of that kind I spoke. We could none of us live without you now. My thoughts had a very different object."

"And that was——"

"Simply this"—and here he made a great effort, and spoke rapidly, as if fearing to dwell on the words. "Law-suits and knavish attorneys have wasted three-fourths of my estate: the remainder I scarcely know if I be its master or not; on that portion, however, the old house stands, and the few acres that survive the wreck. At this moment heavy proceedings are pending in the courts, if successful in which, I shall be left in possession of the home of my father, and not turned adrift upon the world, a beggar. There—don't look so pale, child—

the story is an old one now, and has few terrors for us as long as it remains merely anticipated evil. This is a sad tale for your ears. I know it," said he, wiping away a tear that would come in spite of him.

Both were now silent. The old man paused, uncertain how he should proceed further. Kate spoke not; for as yet she could neither see the drift of the communication, or, if it were in any way addressed to her, what part she was expected to take in the matter.

"Are you aware, my dear," resumed he, after a considerable delay, "that your father was married to your mother when she was but sixteen?"

"I have often heard she was scarcely more than a child," said Kate, timidly—for she had no recollection of having seen either of her parents.

"A child in years, love, she was; but a woman in grace, good sense, and accomplishments—in fact, so fortunate was my poor brother in his choice, he ever regarded the youthfulness of his wife as one of the reasons of that amiability of temper she possessed. Often have we talked of this together, and nothing could convince him to the contrary, as if, had the soil been unfruitful, the tares and the thistles had not been as abundant a crop as the good fruit really was. He acted on his conviction, however, Kate; for he determined, if ever he had a daughter, she should be of age at sixteen—the period of life her mother was married at. I endeavoured to dissuade him. I did my best to expose the dangers and difficulties of such a plan. Perhaps, dearest, I should have been less obstinate in argument, had I been prophetic enough to know what my niece would be; but it was all in vain. The idea had become a dominant one with him, and I was obliged to yield; and now, Kate, after the long lapse of years—for the conversation I allude to took place a great while ago—it is my lot to say, that my brother was right and I was wrong—that he foresaw, with a truer spirit, the events of the future than was permitted to me. You were of age two months since."

The young girl listened with eager curiosity to every word that fell from her uncle's lips, and seemed disappointed when he ceased to speak. To have gone thus far and no farther, did not satisfy her mind, and she waited with impatience for him to continue.

"I see my child," said he gently, "you are not aware of the proceedings of coming of age; you have not heard, perhaps, that as your guardian, I hold in my hands the fortune your father bequeathed to you; it was his portion as a younger son, for, poor fellow, he had the

family failing, and never could live within his income. Your ten thousand—he always called it yours—he never encroached upon—and that sum, at least, is secured to you."

Although Kate knew that her uncle was her guardian, and had heard that some property would revert to her, what its amount was she had not the most remote idea of, nor that her power over it should commence so soon.

"I see uncle—I understand all you say," said she, hurriedly; "I am of age, and the owner of ten thousand pounds."

The tone of decision she employed, half terrified the O'Donoghue for the prudence of his communication, and he almost hesitated to answer her directly—"Yes, my child, it is a rent-charge—a——"

"I care not for the name, sir; does it represent the value?"

"Unquestionably it does."

"Take it, then, dearest uncle," said she, flinging herself upon his neck, "take it and use it, so that it may bring some comfort to yourself, some ease of mind at least, and make your home a happier one. What need to think of the boys—Mark and Herbert are not of the mould that need fear failure, whatever path they follow; and, as for me, when you grow weary of me, the Sacré Cœur will gladly take me back; indeed, they feel their work of conversion of me but very imperfectly executed," added she, smiling, "and the dear nuns would be well pleased to finish their task."

"Kate, my child, my own darling," cried the old man, clasping her to his heart, "this may not, this cannot be."

"It must, and it shall be, uncle," said she, resolutely. "If my dear father's will be not a nullity, I have power over my fortune."

"But not to effect your ruin, Kate."

"No, sir, nor shall I. Will my dear uncle love me less for the consciousness in my own heart, that I am doing right? Will he have a smile the less for me, that I can return it with an affection warmer from very happiness? I cannot believe this; nor can I think that you would render your brother's daughter unworthy of her father. You would not refuse *him*." Her lip trembled, and her eyes grew full, as she uttered the last few words in a voice, every word of which went to the old man's heart.

"There is but one way, Kate."

"What need of more, uncle; do we want a choice of roads, if we see a straight path before us?"

"Yes, dearest—but it will be said I should not have suffered you to do this—that in accepting a loan."

"A loan!" uttered she, reproachfully.

"As that, or nothing, can I ever touch a farthing of it," replied the O'Donoghue. "No, no! Distress and hardship have been a weary load this many a year; but all sense of honour is not yet obliterated in this poor heart."

"Be it as you please, my dear, dear uncle," said the affectionate girl; "only let it not cost you another painful thought, to rob me of so many happy ones. There now, we must never speak of this any more;" and, so saying, she kissed him twice, and rose from her chair. "We are going to the 'Lodge' to-morrow, to spend the day; Herbert is so well that he comes with us."

"And Mark—what of him, dearest?"

"Mark will be none of us, sir. We are either too gay, or too frivolous, or too silly, or too something or other, for his solemn humour, and he only frowns and stares at us; but all that will pass away soon; I shall find out the key to his temper yet, and then, make him pay for all his arrears of sulkiness."

"It is our changed condition, my love, that has made him thus," said the father, anxious to excuse the young man's morose habits.

"The poorer courage his, then," replied the high-spirited girl, "I have no patience for a man who acts but the looking-glass to fortune—frowns when she frowns, and smiles when she smiles. No! Give me the temper that can enjoy the sunshine, and brave the storm—take all the good the world affords, and show a bold heart to resist the evil."

"My own brother, my poor dear Mark, spoke there," cried the old man, in an ecstacy, as, springing up, he flung his arms about her; "and that's your philosophy, sweet Kate?"

"Even so; the stout heart to the stae brae, as Sir Archy would call it, and as he mutters every evening he has to climb the steep stair towards his bed-room. And now, good night, dear uncle—good night."

With an affectionate greeting, the old man took his leave of her for the night, and sat down, in a frame of mingled happiness and shame, to think over what had passed.

The O'Donoghue was very far from feeling satisfied with himself for what he had done. Had Kate been at all difficult of persuasion—had she yielded to his arguments, or been convinced by any explanation of his views, he would soon have reconciled himself to the act, as one in which both parties concurred. Far from this—he saw that her only motive was affection; that she would listen to nothing save the promptings of her own warm heart; she would not let him even exculpate himself from

the charge of his own conscience; and, although acquitted by her, he felt the guilt still upon him.

There was a time when he would not have stooped to such a course; but then he was rich—rich in the world's wealth, and the honour such affluence suggests; for, alas! humbling as the avowal may seem, the noble traits so often admired in prosperity, are but the promptings of a spirit revelling in its own enjoyment—open-handed and generous, because these qualities are luxuries; free to give, because the giving involves gratitude; and gratitude is the incense of weakness to power—of poverty to wealth. How often are the warm affections, nurtured by happy circumstances, mistaken for the evidence of right principles! How frequently are the pleasurable impulses of the heart confounded with the well-directed judgments of the mind? This man was less changed than he knew of—the world of his circumstances was, indeed, different, but he was little altered; the same selfishness that once made him munificent, now made him mean; but, whether conferring or accepting favours, the spirit was one.

Besides, how ingenious is the mind in suggesting plausible reasons for its indulgences!—how naturally easy did it seem to borrow and repay! The very words satisfied his scruples on that score; but if he were indeed so contented with himself, why did he fear lest any one should ever learn the circumstance? Why cower with shame before himself, to think of his brother-in-law, or even Mark hearing of it? Were these the signs of conscious rectitude, or were they the evidence of a spirit seeking rest in casuistry and self-deception. In this conflict of alternate approval and condemnation, he passed the greater part of the night—sometimes, a struggling sense of honour, urging him to regret a course so fraught with humiliations of every kind; and again, a thrill of delight would run through his heart to think of all the pleasure he could confer upon his favourite boy—the indulgences he could once more shower upon him. He fancied the happiness of emancipation from pressing difficulties, and how instinctively Mark's buoyant temper would take the tone of their altered fortunes; and he, once again, become the gay and reckless youth he loved to see him.

"He must have that brown horse Kerry speaks of," muttered he to himself. "Sir Marmaduke shall not outbid us there, and we'll see which of the two best becomes his saddle. I'll back my own boy against his scarlet-coated fop, for a thousand. They've got some couples of dogs too, Kerry was telling me, up the mountains—We must enquire about them; with eight or ten couple, Mark could have good sport in the glen. Then there's those bills of Callaghan's—but he'll not press

hard when he sees we've money. Cassidy must get his £800, and so he shall; and that scoundrel, Swaby, will be sending in his bill of costs; but a couple of hundred pounds ought to stop his mouth. Archy, too—by Jove, I forget how much I owe him now; but he doesn't, I'll warrant him. Well, well—if it won't stop the leak, it will, at least, give us time to work the pumps—ay, time, time!" He asked for no more; he only sought to reach the haven himself, and cared nothing what happened the craft, nor the crew, afterwards.

His next thought was how to effect all the legal arrangements in these complicated matters, without the knowledge of Mark or Sir Archy; and on this difficult point he spent till nigh morning deliberating. The only mode he could think of was, by writing to Swaby himself, and making him aware of the whole proceeding. That of course would be attended by its own penalties, as Swaby would take care that his own costs were among the first things to be liquidated; but yet it seemed the sole course open to him, and with the resolve to do this on the morrow, he turned on his pillow, and fell asleep.

The morning broke, with happiness to the uncle and the niece; but it was a happiness of a very different order. To him, the relief of mind, for the long harrassing cares of debt and difficulty, was a boon of inestimable price—life and liberty at once to the imprisoned spirit of his proud heart. To her, the higher and nobler sense of gratification, which flows from having acted well, sent a thrill of ecstasy through her bosom, such as only gentle and generous youth can ever feel. And thus, while the O'Donoghue mused over the enjoyments and pleasures his new accession of wealth might place at his disposal, she revelled in the delight of having ministered to the happiness of one she had always regarded as a father, and even felt grateful to him for the emotions of her own heart.

The O'Donoghue's first thought on awaking was to employ this large sum to liquidate some of his most pressing debts, and to make such arrangements as might enable them to live economically but comfortably, paying off those creditors whose exorbitant interest was consuming all the remnant of his income, and entering into contracts with others for the gradual repayment of the loans. The more he reflected on these good intentions, the less pleasure did they yield him. He had, for years past, taught himself to regard a creditor as an implacable enemy. The very idea of succumbing smacked of defeat. He had defied the law so long, it looked like cowardice to surrender now; besides the very complication of his affairs offered an excuse, which he was not slow to catch at. How could he pay Cassidy in full, and only give Hickson

a part? Would not the mere rumour of his paying off his debts bring down a host of demands that had almost slumbered themselves out of existence. He had often heard that his grandfather "muddled away his fortune paying small debts." It could not be supposed he would reject the traditions of his own house—nor did he.

He judged wisely, if not well, that new habits of expenditure would do more to silence the complaints of duns than the most accurately calculated system of liquidation. That entertainments and equipages, a stable full of horses, and a house crammed with guests, are a receipt in full for solvency, which, however some may distrust, none are bold enough to question openly.

If the plan had fewer excellencies, it, at least, suited him better; and he certainly opened the campaign with vigour. No sooner had he decided on his line of acting, than he despatched Kerry O'Leary to Cork with a letter for Swaby, his attorney, requiring his immediate presence at Carrig-na-curra, and adding, "that if he brought a couple of hundred pounds over with him at the same time, he might include them with the costs, and get a check for the whole together."

As the old man sealed his epistle, he chuckled over the thoughts of Swaby's astonishment, and fancied the many guesses the crafty attorney would frame to account for such unexpected prosperity. The little remaining sorrow he felt for his share in the transaction gave way to the vulgar pleasure of this surprize; for so is it, the conflict with poverty can debase the mind, and make the very straits and stratagems of want seem straits of cleverness and ability.

It was a day of pleasure almost to all. Sir Archy, dressed in a suit which had not seen daylight for many a previous year, gave his arm to Kate, and, accompanied by Herbert, set out to pass the day at "The Lodge." Mark alone had no participation in the general joy; he stood, with folded arms, at the window of the old tower, and gazed on the group that moved along the road. Although he never thought of accompanying them, there was a sense of desertion in his position of which he could not divest himself. With the idea of the pleasure their visit would afford them came the reflection that he was debarred from his share of such enjoyment, and the galling feeling of inferiority sent the blood, with a throbbing current, through his temples, and covered his face with a deep flush. He retorted his own isolation against those he had so strenuously avoided, and accused them of the very fault of which he was himself guilty. "My uncle is more distant to me than ever," muttered he, "and even Herbert, too; Herbert that used to look up to and rely on me, even he shuns me." He did not utter his cousin's name,

but a single tear, that rolled heavily down his cheek, and seemed to make it tremble as it passed, showed that another and a deeper spring of sorrow was opened in his heart. With a sudden gesture of impatience he roused himself from his musing, and hastily descending the stair, he crossed the old court-yard, and, without any fixed resolve as to his course, walked down the road; nor was it until after proceeding some distance, that he perceived he was rapidly gaining on the little party on their way to the Lodge; then he quitted the high road, and soon lost himself in one of the mountain glens.

As for the others, it was indeed a day of unaccustomed pleasure, and such as rarely presented itself in that solitary valley. All that kindness and hospitality could suggest was done by the family at the Lodge, to make their visit agreeable; and while Sir Marmaduke vied with his son and daughter in courteous attentions to his guests, they, on their part, displayed the happy consciousness of these civilities by efforts to please not less successful.

Sir Archy—albeit the faculty had long lain in disuse—was possessed of conversational powers of a high order, and could blend his observation of passing events with the wisdom derived from reflection, and the experience of long intercourse with the world; while, as if to relieve the sombre colouring of his thoughts, Kate's lively sallies and sparkling repartees lit up the picture, and gave it both brilliancy and action. The conversation ranged freely over the topics which form the staple of polite intercourse in the world of the cultivated and the fashionable; and, although Sir Archy had long been removed from such companionship, it was easy to perceive how naturally he could revert to a class of subjects, with which he had once been familiar.

It was thus alternating remarks of the past, with allusions to the present—mingling grave and gay, with that happy blending which springs from the social intercourse of different ages—they sat, after dinner, watching, through the unshuttered window, the bright moonlight that streamed across the glen and glittered on the lake, the conversation, from some reference to the scenery, turned to the condition of Ireland, and the then state of her people. Sir Marmaduke, notwithstanding his late experiences, fully maintaining the accuracy of his own knowledge in matters, which have not ceased to puzzle even wiser heads, gained confidence from the cautious reserve of Sir Archy, who rarely ventured an opinion, and never hazarded a direct assertion.

"They would have me believe, in England," said Sir Marmaduke, "that Ireland was on the very brink of a rebellion; that the organization of revolt was perfect, and only waiting French co-operation to

burst forth; but how absurd such statements are to us who live amongst them."

Sir Archy smiled significantly, and shook his head.

"You, surely, have no fears on this head, sir? It is not possible to conceive a state of more profound peace, than we observe around us. Men do not take up arms against a rightful authority, without the working of strong passions and headlong impulses. What is there to indicate them here?"

"You'll allow, Sir Marmaduke, they are no overlikely to mak' ye a confidant, if they intend a rising," was the dry observation of M'Nab.

"True; but could they conceal their intentions from me—that is the question? Think you that I should not have discovered them long since, and made them known to the government?"

"I trust you'd have done no such thing, sir," interposed Fred. "I heard Maitland say, there never was a chance of keeping this country down, if we had not a brush with them every thirty or forty years; and, if I don't mistake, the time for a lesson has just come round."

"Is it so certain on which side is to be the teacher?" said Kate, with a voice whose articulate distinctness actually electrified the party; and, as it drew their eyes towards her, heightened the flush that mantled on her cheek.

"It never occurred to me to doubt the matter," said Fred, with an air of ill-dissembled mortification.

"No more than you anticipated it, perhaps," retorted she, quickly; "and yet events are happening every day which take the world by surprise. See there!—look. That mountain-peak was dark but a moment back; and now, see the blazing fire that has burst forth upon it!"

The whole party started to their feet, and drew near the window, from which, at a distance of about two miles, the red glare of a fire was seen. It burned brightly for some minutes, and then decaying, became extinguished, leaving the dark mountain black and gloomy as before.

"What can it mean?" said Sir Marmaduke, in amazement. "Can it be some signal of the smugglers? I understand they still venture on this coast."

"That mountain yonder is not seen from the bay," said Sir Archy, thoughtfully. "It can scarcely be that."

"I think we must ska Miss O'Donoghue for the explanation," said Fred Travers. "She is the only one here not surprized at its appearance."

"Miss O'Donoghue is one of those who, you assert, are to be taught, and, therefore, unable to teach others," said she, in a low whisper, only audible to Frederick, who stood beside her, and he almost started at the strange meaning the words seemed to convey.

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